DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 357 181 CE 063 558

TITLE	[Success Stories:] Empowering the Adult Learner.
INSTITUTION	Royce and Royce, Inc., Lancaster, PA.
PUB DATE	93
NOTE	55p.
PUB TYPE	Reports - Descriptive (141)
EDRS PRICE	MF01/PC03 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS	Academic Achievement; *Adult Basic Education; *Adult Literacy; Basic Skills; *Biographies; Career Development; *Literacy Education; Mathematics Skills; *Outcomes of Education; Participant Satisfaction; Reading Skills; *Success
IDENTIFIERS	Empowerment; Pennsylvania

ABSTRACT

This publication contains the success stories of 10 outstanding men and women who have overcome seemingly insurmountable obstacles to become contributing citizens of Pennsylvania. These stories describe how, through their participation in Pennsylvania's adult basic education and literacy programs, they were aided in their successful struggles to enhance their reading and math skills, to develop new career interests and opportunities, and to take charge of their lives. (YLB)

****
* Reproductions supplied by EDRS are the best that can be made *
* from the original document. *
****

ED357181

EMPOWERING THE ADULT LEARNER 1993

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

BUREAU

OF

ADULT BASIC

AND

LITERACY EDUCATION

PROGRAMS

ACHIEVEMENT

ABLE

Achievement

Award

EXCELLENCE

BASED ON

LEARNING

PENNSYLVANIA

DEPARTMENT

OF

EDUCATION

HONORS OUTSTANDING

ADULT STUDENTS

IN SUCCESS

STORIES

COMMONWEALTH OF PENNSYLVANIA
Robert P. Casey, *Governor*

DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
Donald M. Carroll, Jr., *Secretary*

Office of Postsecondary and Higher Education
Charles Fuget, *Commissioner*

Bureau of Adult Basic and Literary Education
John Christopher, *Director*

SUCCESS STORIES SELECTION COMMITTEE

Samuel Brinton, *ABE Director*
East Pennsboro Area School District

Peggy Greene, *Instructor*
Harrisburg State Hospital

Cheryl Harmon, *AdvancE*
PDE Resource Center

John Heisey, *Supervisor*
Lebanon Adult Learning Center

Caroline Lee, *Coordinator of Adult Literacy*
Community College of Allegheny County

Ralph Morgan, *Associate Executive Director*
Schuylkill IU #29

Irene Paul, *Director*
Red Land Community Action Program

Dan Partin, *353 Advisor*
PDE, Bureau of ABLE

Sherry Royce
Success Stories Project Director

Margaret Shaw, *ABE Advisor*
PDE, Bureau of ABLE

Cynthia West, *Community Relations Officer*
Dauphin Deposit Bank

Table of Contents

ALLEGHENY COUNTY
Outstanding Adult Student: Howard Brown
Sponsor: Connelley Technical Institute 4

CENTRE COUNTY
Outstanding Adult Student: Charles I. Kr.ner
Sponsors: CIU 10 Development Center 6
Mid-State Literacy Council

LACKAWANNA COUNTY
Outstanding Adult Student: Ted Lee
Sponsor: Scranton Council for Literacy Advance 8

Outstanding Adult Student: Tammy McGraw
Sponsor: Lackawanna Junior College 10

LUZERNE COUNTY
Outstanding Adult Student: Cassie Dawson
Sponsor: Luzerne Intermediate Unit 18 12

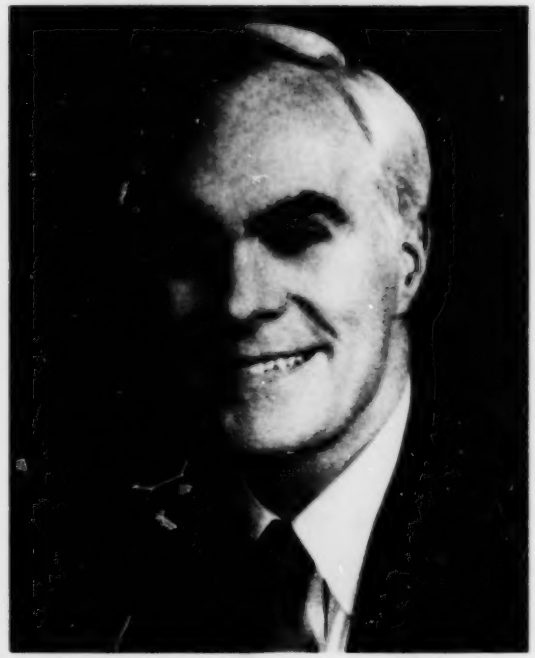
LYCOMING COUNTY
Outstanding Adult Student: Debra Winters
Sponsor: Lycoming County Literacy Council 14

MIFFLIN COUNTY
Outstanding Adult Student: Sophia Heikes
Sponsor: TIU Adult Education & Job Training Center 16

MONTGOMERY COUNTY
Outstanding Adult Student: Carol Groce
Sponsor: Eagleville Hospital 18

PHILADELPHIA COUNTY
Outstanding Adult Student: Dalia Castro
Sponsor: Community Learning Center 20

Outstanding Adult Student: Veronica Franklin
Sponsor: Lutheran Settlement House Women's Program . . . 22



Dear Reader:

In this publication, *SUCCESS STORIES: Empowering the Adult Learner,* you will read the inspiring stories of ten outstanding men and women who have overcome seemingly insurmountable obstacles to become contributing citizens of our Commonweath. Through their participation in Pennsylvania's adult basic education and literacy programs, they were aided in their successful struggles to enhance their reading and math skills, to develop new career interests and opportunities, and to take charge of their lives. The perseverance and hope demonstrated by these courageous adults is truly moving.

Ellen and I have been strongly supportive of adult basic education efforts in our state. Over the past six years, we've backed up that support with an historic state investment in adult literacy programs. We are convinced that it takes this kind of educational commitment to ensure that every citizen of our state has the opportunity to reach his/her highest potential in life.

Nothing is more essential to the future competitiveness of our economy and the vitality of our society than the education of our people. When people cannot read, they cannot participate fully in their work places or their communities. And we all suffer because of it.

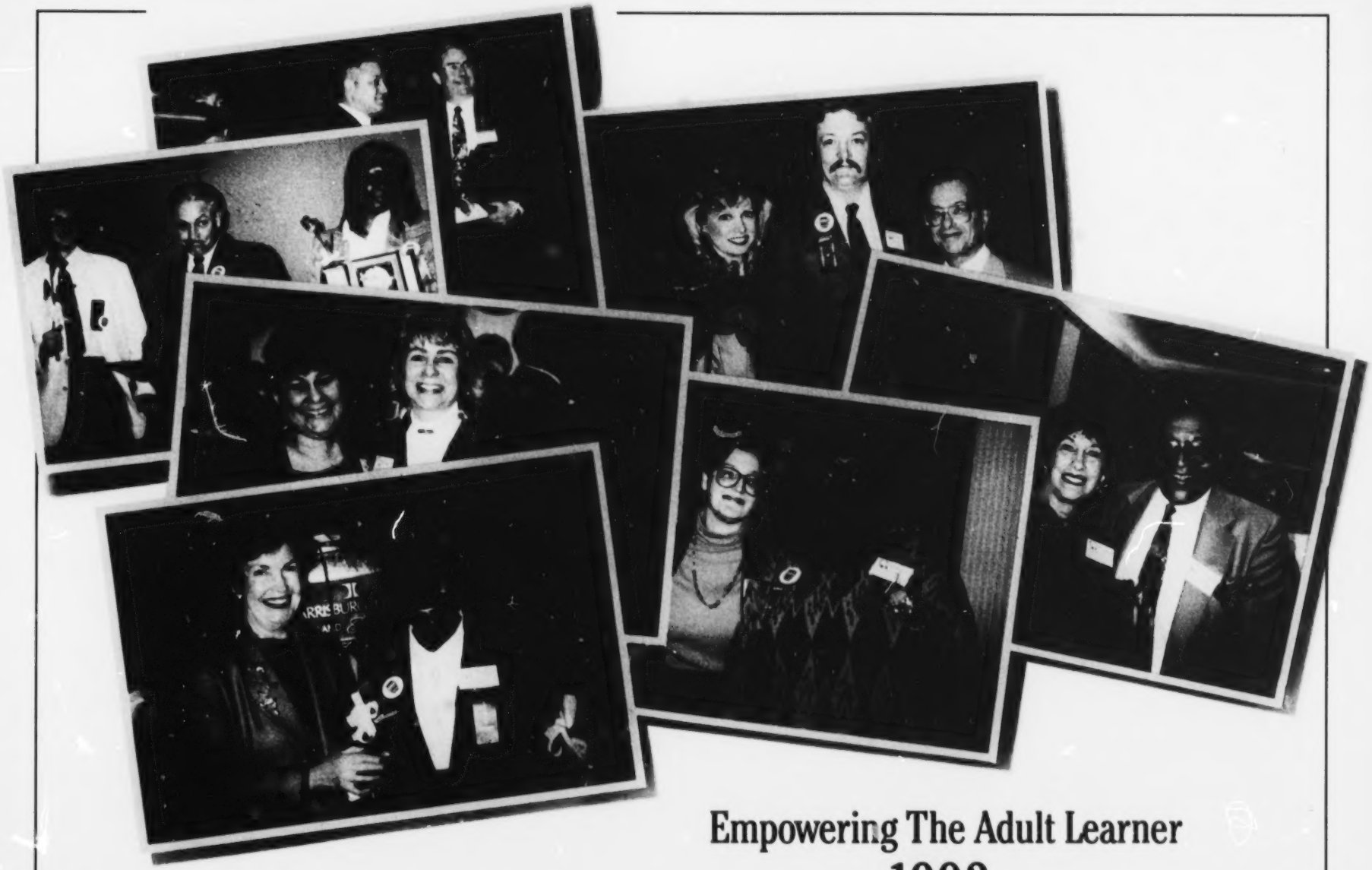
That's why it's so important for all of us to support efforts to improve literacy in our state. State government will continue its financial and moral commitment. But our success depends on the active involvement of everyone who cares about our future as a state and as a people.

I hope that *SUCCESS STORIES: Empowering the Adult Learner* will inspire all of us to help bring the joys and rewards of literacy and lifelong learning to every Pennsylvanian.

Sincerely,

Robert P. Casey

Robert P. Casey
Governor, Commonwealth of Pennsylvania



Empowering The Adult Learner

1993

HOWARD BROWN

"The bottom line is: Believe in yourself.
Have true faith in your friends.
Success becomes inevitable."

Howard Brown

Sponsor: Alfred R. Fascetti, Connelley Technical Institute and Adult Education Center

Howard Brown grew up in a home where his father beat him and put wine in his baby bottle to pacify him. Raised by this alcoholic father who spent most his time on the road and in bars, Howard and his sister learned to take care of themselves. Many unrelated "aunts" and "uncles" passed through their lives, but without significance and meaning. The house he grew up in had one room, no phone, and no TV or heat. The refrigerator had a lock on it and food was distributed military style. Howard and his sister went to school to keep warm. Wrapped in rags, hungry and cold, he was unable to concentrate. Only his sister who was three years older provided direction and order in his life. Then, at 12, when he began to "party," having random sex and drinking, his sister disowned him.

The changes which were occurring during the 60s and 70s, the drugs, the civil rights struggles, and the anti-war movement, appealed to Howard. Just as the nation was rebelling, so was he. Participating in the anti-war movement fit his lifestyle and beliefs. While at a public level, he was doing something he believed worthwhile; at a personal level, his life was sinking into despair. Drinking and emotional rebellion were his way of coping with himself and others.

His marriage at 17 to a bride of 14 was a "shotgun wedding." His bride turned out not to be pregnant, and the marriage lasted only six months. Howard cannot remember a long span of his life after that. Drinking affected both his actions and his memory. He was fortunate in his late twenties, to have a friend who took him under his wing and introduced him to self-help psychology. Andrew Carnegie, Napoleon Hill, and Benjamin Franklin were catalysts in his quest for self-direction and influenced his way of thinking and behaving socially and morally. Work for the disenfranchised which began with his activism in the 60s has continued. The homeless cause has become his "calling." He sees this calling as a justification for his existence.

In September 1991, Howard entered Connelley Technical Institute and Adult Education Center to pursue the field of Building Trades Maintenance. He hoped that this trade might be a viable vocation to help his cause. The leadership skills he used as an advocate for others were now used to pursue something practical and useful for himself. He volunteered to help his classmates, teachers, and administration whenever some task needed to be done, and he became a role model for others. To his amazement, in March 1992 he took and passed his GED.

Feeling this was a gift to share, he volunteered to teach reading and math skills to others. While doing this, he was still visible in the Pittsburgh community advocating the homeless cause. Today he serves on several boards which actively oversee homeless issues. While waiting to receive a job as a custodian with the Pittsburgh Public Schools, he is volunteering as a tutor in reading and math.

CHARLES KRINER

"I wish I could get on the radio and convince people to get help. I don't care who knows now! I have a GED and I want others to have this chance, too!"

Charles Kriner

CENTER COUNTY

Sponsors: *Mae Anna Korb, CIU 10 Development Center*
Jeanne London, Sue Conrady,
Mid-State Literacy Council

When Charles Kriner failed seventh grade for the second time, he was so frustrated and discouraged that he quit school. He had also failed first, third, and fifth grades. He could not read. Chuck got a very fine job with the city department of water; that is, until he could not pass a job related test. Since that time, he has worked as a heavy equipment operator.

Years later, he married Alice; they had three children and he had a steady job working in the coal mines. He seemed to have his life in order. But always in the back of Chuck's mind was the fear that he might be asked to read directions, do coal orders or, worse yet, take a required test for job advancement. He had wanted more out of life but knew he could not apply for different work; not with a family to support and a "secret" inability to read.

In 1990, after his oldest son obtained a GED, Chuck heard a radio advertisement for the Mid-State Literacy Council and decided to enroll. For almost 18 months he would come home every Wednesday after working a 10 hour shift and driving an hour to and from work. He would then eat dinner, shower, change clothes and drive to tutoring sessions. He was always on time. Chuck learned to read and decode words, then sentences, paragraphs, stories, and the newspaper. In February 1992, having advanced from a third grade to a ninth grade reading level, he was ready to enroll in a GED program. In March, he enrolled in the CIU 10's Development Center for Adult's GED class in DuBois. That May 1992, at the age of 44, he passed the GED test. When they got the news, his son said: "I knew you could do it, Dad. I'm proud of you!" Chuck looked up through his tears with a wide grin and said: "I never thought that I would ever hear my son say that."

Because of Chuck's enthusiasm and example, his youngest son returned to finish high school. Chuck has spoken at tutor training sessions throughout Clearfield County and has encouraged his fellow GED classmates in their studies. "I wish that I could just get on the radio and convince people to get help. I don't care who knows now. I have a GED," he beams, "and I want others to have this chance too!" That's why he is now volunteering for the literacy council to help others learn to read so that they, too, can earn a GED.

"It's not too late to learn to read;
so DO IT!"

Ted Lee

Sponsor: *Diana Statsman, Scranton Council for Literacy Advance*

When Ted Lee was in the ninth grade he lost his father whom he had loved, admired, and relied upon. The child of his addicted older sister, he had been adopted by his father and mother. When his grief-stricken mother moved home to New York, Ted had to face the trauma of adjusting to a new school along with the loss of his father. In the new school, he was assigned an individual tutor instead of being placed in the learning disabled class. He began to realize that he "wasn't dumb;" he could learn; he just couldn't read. He experienced academic success, but the stress of studying incessantly was too great. One night he attempted suicide by slashing his wrists. He was admitted to a psychiatric unit and placed on drugs which led to a real depression, and another suicide attempt.

His mother in an effort to help him returned to Scranton and placed Ted in the psychiatric unit at Community Medical Center. He is not sure how long he was there or for how long he was treated at the hospital's outpatient facility, the Scranton Counseling Center. What Ted does remember is that the drugs given him resulted in a loss of muscle control and a feeling of disorientation. Deciding to straighten out his life, he took himself out of treatment and off drugs, cold turkey. Applying for a job at a local Hill's Department store, he told the truth about his problems, his commitment, and his determination to turn his life around. The interviewer admired his determination and agreed to give him a chance.

In May 1989 he enrolled in a literacy program run by SCOLA, the Scranton Council for Literacy Advance. He says asking for help with his reading was one of the hardest things he has ever done. He made arrangements with Hills to be released from his work duties at the time the tutor was available. In return, he agreed to be "on call" whenever he was needed for work on weekends and evenings. Although this agreement required him to work 80 and 90 hour weeks, it was worth it. He loved learning and enjoyed working with his tutor even though it meant walking two miles to and from lessons.

Ted now reads at sixth grade level and has been promoted from stock boy to cashier. He has obtained a driver's license and bought a new car with the money he earned by working overtime. He continues to work with his tutor and has completed 15 of the 21 correspondence courses he needs to get his high school diploma. He plans to continue his studies with International Correspondence Schools (ICS) in the field of Hotel and Restaurant Management.

He is an unsurpassed spokesman for literacy and his story has been featured in the local newspaper. He is stopped at local stores, in church, and on the street by well-wishers and potential tutors. As a result of the story, he was approached by ICS and is now being paid as a consultant and through referrals. His latest plans are to start a Student Support Group at SCOLA.

TAMMY McGRAW

"I know working, studying, and taking care of a baby is hard right now, but when I graduate, it will all have been worth it."

Tammy McGraw

LACKAWANNA COUNTY

Sponsor: *Joyce Kerrick, Lackawanna Junior College*

As a child, Tammy McGraw had adult responsibilities. She cleaned the house, did the laundry, shopped for groceries, cooked dinner, and took care of her younger brother while her mother stayed in the bar from opening to closing every day. By the time she was in high school, she realized that her mother was an alcoholic who would drink a case of beer a day while her live-in boyfriend drank a pint of whiskey.

Because of the fighting, crying, and loud music, Tammy could not do her homework until the house quieted down, usually about 3:30 am. Most of her days were spent falling asleep in class and before long she was flunking out. Skipping school was the only time she had to herself. By the time she reached 11th grade, life at home had become intolerable. She wasn't just a maid, but a baby-sitter for her mother's friends, a tutor to her sister, and the person who kept her mother's boyfriend from beating up her kid brother.

Tammy turned to her boyfriend, Jim, and spent as much time with him as possible. But she never knew what she would find when she returned home. In her senior year, she came home to find her mother in the yard, sprawled in a lawn chair, completely naked, holding a beer and crying. That was the day she decided to quit school. When she turned 18, Tammy decided the only way out of her life was to get pregnant. But when her boyfriend decided she should have an abortion, she refused and he left her. Alone, scared and pregnant, she ended up going to public assistance and moving into a project.

After the baby was born, she began to think about what kind of life this helpless baby was going to have. Tammy realized it was up to her to do something about that. She joined the Single Point of Contact (SPOC) program and in March 1992 entered an Adult Basic Education class at Lackawanna Junior College. With the help of Anita Cola, her patient, encouraging teacher, she found the courage to get through her studies and her life. It was hard coming home, feeding the baby, cleaning, doing homework and trying to study. But she made it and received her GED in June 1992.

She returns to class often, helping other students when the teacher is busy, giving encouragement to all who feel they can't pass the tests, and working on the computers. Although Tammy had to withdraw from school this fall due to personal problems, she plans to return to classes in the spring. She wants to become a medical secretary so she will be able to make a good life for her family. Her mother watches her grandchild while her daughter works. Tammy says: "I know working, studying, and taking care of a baby is hard right now, but when I graduate, it will all have been worth it."

"If you fail, don't stop trying.
You can make it if you try!"

Cassie Dawson

Sponsors: *Frank Nardone, Luzerne IU 18*
Frank Wascalis, Bonnie Blaskiewicz

Each time she saw one of her children graduate from high school, Cassie Dawson knew that one day she would like to walk across that stage to receive her diploma. Cassie was born and raised in the south and left school after completing the seventh grade. She married young and put her education on hold to raise her children. In 1962 the family moved to Pennsylvania, and 24 years later a literacy commercial on television prompted her to called the 800 literacy hot line.

In 1986, she began to work with Mary Callahan, a volunteer literacy tutor at the local library. At the same time, Cassie was given custody of three of her very young granddaughters. She knew it would be difficult to raise them but she welcomed the job. Since the girls were too young to go to school, she often took them with her to her tutoring sessions. Many times, they had to walk over a mile to the church where she met with her tutor. Cassie's health was not always the best and several times her studies were interrupted for medical reasons. Her tutoring was also interrupted while she attended Luzerne County Community College to attain her Nurse's Aide Certification. After working for a while as a Nurse's Aide, she resumed her literacy training.

In 1990, both Cassie and Mrs. Callahan felt she was ready to enter GED classes. She entered the Adult Literacy Program cosponsored by the Luzerne Intermediate Unit and the Luzerne County Human Resources Development Department. Her initial scores were barely above fourth grade level, and Cassie knew she would have to work very hard to pass the GED test. She simply refused to give up although she thought of it many times. It wasn't easy at her age to raise three young children alone, maintain a part time job to help supplement her welfare income, and attend classes full time. It took her four years of literacy training, two years of GED classes, and four attempts at the test for her to realize her dream. In June 1992, a full 50 years after dropping out of school, she got her high school diploma. As her proud children watched, she was given a standing ovation as she walked across the stage to receive her diploma.

Cassie is currently enrolled in Allied Medical careers where she plans to complete training to become a practical nurse. She often visits GED classes to offer words of encouragement to fellow students.

Speaking to a group of Single Point of Contact (SPOC) literacy and pre-GED students, she offered the following advice: "It's not always going to be easy, but if you fall down, get up. You can make it if you really try."

"I would encourage anyone who can't read to get help. . . It does wonders for you. It did for me. . . I can pick up a book and read!"

Debra Winters

Sponsor: *Sharon DiStasi, Lycoming County Literacy Project*

Debra Winters grew up as one of six children of functionally illiterate parents in Montoursville, Pennsylvania. Debra remembers her Dad reading well enough to pay the bills, but she has no recollection of storybooks or magazines in her home. She was never read to and received no help with her homework. She was ill as a child and it took her four years to complete the first two grades of school. When she was in the fourth grade a broken jaw that required surgery sidelined her for most of the year but she was passed to fifth grade because of her age. Frustrated due to her inability to read and to understand, she became disruptive.

At home, equally frustrated parents argued and fought with each other constantly. Alcohol abuse was always a factor and physical abuse of the children resulted. In seventh grade at the age of 14, Debra become pregnant. Her pregnancy was deemed "an embarrassment and bad example for the other students" and she was asked to leave school. Other kids her age shunned her and she was essentially alone. At the age of 15 she married and by the time she was 18 years old, she was the mother of two daughters and a son. Her husband, who was six years older than she, was verbally and occasionally physically abusive. Debra remembers: "He called me stupid all the time because I couldn't read, and I believed him."

When she was 22, tragedy struck. Her six-year old son, Jack, was killed when a fire truck backed over him. "I knew when I survived his death that I could handle anything that came my way," she said. At the age of 24, diagnosed with cervical cancer, she was called upon to show that strength. As her daughters entered school, she did her best to help them, trying to ensure that "they did not end up like me." But the day came when they knew more than she did.

After 15 years, Debra walked away from her marriage taking her daughters with her. A series of low-income jobs followed, until she got a job as a machine operator. Realizing that she was handicapped on the job by her inability to read and do basic math, she decided she needed help and enrolled in October 1991 in Lycoming County Literacy Project classes. Highly motivated and totally supported in her efforts by her second husband, Lee, she works hard to gain the skills needed to get into a GED program.

Debra decided to go public with her struggles when her employer, the West Company, instituted a workplace skills program. She sits on the board of the Lycoming County Literacy Project as a student representative and advisor. She has been featured in the local newspapers and very recently convinced her older sister and brother-in-law to get literacy help. "The first step is the hardest, but go for help," she tells fellow workers and friends. Debra would like to graduate from the high school she attended and then go to beauty school.

SOPHIA HEIKES

"Geting my GED helped me better myself and helped my self-esteem . . .I feel a lot more confident about myself."

Sophia Heikes

Sponsor: *Kelly Barron and Randy Varner*
TIU Adult Ed & Job Training Center

Because Sophia Heikes' mother moved to New York City from Puerto Rico, Sophia spoke very little English until she started kindergarten. She left school in 10th grade, after being attacked by three boys in a school hallway. Although she was rescued by a security guard, she was afraid to return. In fact, she decided it was time to leave the city. Sophia was fortunate. She had a Fresh Air family that she had visited every year since she was nine. They loved her like a daughter and encouraged her move to Juniata County.

But leaving the city did not mean that she had escaped violence. She met her husband while working in a sewing factory. They had two children while she struggled in a marriage in which she was constantly told that she could never do anything right. Sophia eventually ended up in the hospital as the result of a drug overdose. Leaving this unhappy marriage, she entered a new relationship that involved physical abuse. It took a six-month return to New York City to escape that situation.

Returning to Central Pennsylvania, she became pregnant with her third child. Even though her pregnancy was high risk, she found another sewing job and after a struggle with the local housing authority, secured a three bedroom home. Everything was going well until her son got sick and she had to miss a lot of work. Laid off and unable to find another job, she became depressed and would sit for hours rocking her baby and crying. In early 1992, friends referred her to the Tuscarora Intermediate Unit's Adult Education and Job Training Center. She started in Life Skills classes and quickly moved into GED classes once she was able to arrange for child care.

Many times Sophia had to miss a class or part of a class due to child care problems. But she would always make up the missed lessons. Sometimes she would become discouraged and get down on herself. But she could be counted on to come back even more determined and focused than before. Her determination, drive, and focus became a source of strength for other members of her class. They drew inspiration from her positive attitude and her strong desire to be a good role model for her children.

Sophia received her GED in September 1992 and moved on to New Choices, a program for displaced homemakers. She now plans to study Licensed Practical Nursing. She is a Headstart volunteer and enjoys working with children in the classroom. As a member of the Headstart policy council, she plans fund raisers and other activities. Her goal is to afford to be able to afford to send her three children to college.

CAROL GROCE

"I'm like the Nike commercial
__ just do it!"

Carol Groce

Sponsor: *Kathleen Marks, Eagleville Hospital*

Carol Groce's father died when she was six, and her mother placed few restraints on her. By her mid-teens, Carol's mother was ill, and any form of discipline was gone. She began drinking at thirteen. Soon after, she started abusing drugs and alcohol, and constantly skipping classes. She left school in the 12th grade and joined the Job Corps. But after three months, she was sent home because her mother was critically ill. When Carol was 17 years of age, her mother died. She continued to stay home and became a caretaker for her nieces. She drifted through abusive relationships, progressing further into addiction, no longer working, allowing others to direct her life. Her five children grew up as she had without direction or proper parenting.

In 1987, she lost her children to protective custody. When she entered Eagleville Hospital, her life was at a dead end. She had lost her self-confidence and self-esteem. But she did have courage. She worked hard toward rebuilding all aspects of her life. She entered a GED class, worked hard, and when she passed the GED, continued attending school to build her typing skills. Carol discovered a career goal. She wanted to become a court reporter.

In 1988, she left treatment and got a job working at a fast food restaurant. She was able to have her children visit her on weekends. After two years, she took a new job in a department store, moved into a larger home, and her children were returned to her. She has rebuilt their faith in her, and now guides them with firmness and direction. Her 18-year-old is working, her 17-year-old just graduated, and her 16- and 15-year-old children are in high school. The six-year-old just started kindergarten. Last fall, Carol started college. She is working on her basics and hopes to enter business school.

An active member of Community Housing Services, an organization for single parents, she helps with fund raising activities and participates in workshops. When asked about the courage it took to turn her life around, she minimizes her part in this transformation and gives praise to her godmother, Pauline, who never gave up on her and to those who lent a hand along her path to recovery. There are not many who, at 38 years of age, could significantly rebuild a life that had such a weak foundation. But Carol says: "I'm like the Nike commercial — just do it."

DALIA CASTRO

"You can overcome a bad situation by not looking at what is around you, but by looking at what is before you."

Dalia Castro

PHILADELPHIA COUNTY

Sponsor: *Jean L. Fleschute, Community Learning Center*

At the age of 14, Dalia Castro found herself without a support system. When her mother, a single parent with seven children, suffered a nervous breakdown, she was passed from relative to relative. Fearing her peers would ridicule her, she dropped out of school and began using drugs, and "hanging out." She moved in with her boyfriend in order to avoid a home filled with family problems.

Dalia entered a key punch training program but she began abusing cocaine and sharing an apartment with an older sister who also had a drug problem. By 19, she was addicted. Later that year when she became pregnant, she went to live with another older sister, and managed to stop using drugs altogether. Soon after her daughter's birth, she began using drugs again. She left her child with her mother, dropped out of sight, and supported her habit by whatever means she could. In 1987 she sustained third degree burns in an illegal night club fire that killed seven and injured 31 people. Although frightened by this experience, it would take another year of addiction before she would decide to change.

Dalia finally began to look at her life and herself when the Courts threatened to take away her infant son who had been born prematurely due to her addiction. It was March 1990 and she was 25 years old. Two months later, after struggling to find a program that would accept her, she joined a Christian drug rehabilitation facility in Philadelphia called Soldiers of the Lord (SOTL). After five months in the program, she had a short relapse and then returned. In the rehabilitation program, she served as an in-house counselor, as well as a bilingual interpreter for other Spanish-speaking clients. Deciding that she wanted to improve her job prospects by furthering her education, Dalia soon found her way to the Transitionally Needy Program, a job readiness training course at Impact Services. In October 1991, Dalia enrolled in the Community Learning Center and began working to improve her education.

Since receiving her GED, Dalia has made many changes in her life. Now 28 years of age, she has left the rehabilitation program and obtained employment in data processing. In the evening, she attends two courses at the Community College of Philadelphia. She would like to help others and plans to become a drug and alcohol counselor. Dalia continues to counsel at SOTL and is a board member of *Impacto de Vida*, a Christian drug rehabilitation program for Latina women. She refers those she counsels to social service and educational programs. Last June, she gave a speech at the center's graduation ceremonies. She also gives talks about her own road to recovery at various churches and rehabilitation facilities, hoping to inspire others who are struggling to change their lives.

VERONICA FRANKLIN

"It's never too late to learn."

Veroncia Franklin

PHILADELPHIA COUNTY

Sponsors: *Carol Goertzel and Daryl Gordon*
Lutheran Settlement House Women's Program

Veronica Franklin grew up in a poor family with seven children in North Philadelphia. There was never enough love, attention or money to go around. She never knew her real father and had a succession of "live-in" fathers with whom she never got along. Although Veronica enjoyed school and did well in school, she felt that she never fit in with the other children. In her senior year she began using drugs as a way to be accepted by her peers. Her mother would not tolerate this and forced her to leave the house. At 16, she was on the street with no home, no money and no future. She was unable to continue attending school and began a 17-year cycle of drug addiction.

During those years she had two children and did her best to provide a stable home for them. But it was impossible. For the past eight years, she has been homeless, living in shelters or with relatives. In 1990, she entered People's Emergency Center, a shelter which provided her with support, counseling, and a stable place to stay. A counselor who was a recovering addict encouraged her to seek help for her drug problem. She entered DRC, a drug rehabilitation center and while there enrolled in the Lutheran Settlement House's adult education program. Finally, her life was stable enough to begin to achieve her many hopes and dreams.

Veronica overcame many obstacles to remain in the GED class. She was still living in the homeless shelter with her two children. She had a serious medical problem which kept her from attending class for two months. But she would not give up. She worked hard at her studies for 17 months and received her GED diploma in July 1992. During her time in class, she helped other students in reading and writing and provided encouragement to students who were nervous about taking the GED tests. Most importantly, she told new students that recovery from drugs would save their life, just as it had saved her own.

In September 1992, she entered a community college and began pursuing her major in Drug and Alcohol Abuse Counseling. She plans to be a counselor in order to share her strength with other recovering addicts. Veronica began college at the same time as her son, Eric, who started at Kutztown University with a full scholarship this year. Finally, after eight years of homelessness, she will be moving into a house this December with her 11-year-old daughter.

Veronica has been and continues to be an inspiration to the other women living in the People's Emergency Shelter. She regularly attends Narcotics Anonymous meetings and she is a tremendous encouragement to adult students. At a recent graduation ceremony she said: "I'm 17 months clean and in those 17 months I've spent 15 months in a GED class. While it doesn't take some people that long to prepare and get a GED, it does for me. If it does for you, I can only suggest that you give yourself that time. If anybody here doesn't have a GED or high school diploma, get it. It's never too late to learn."

Back row, left to right: *Ted Lee, Carol Groce, Tammy McGraw, Sophia Heikes, Howard Brown.*
Front row, left to right: *Debra Winters, Dalia Castro, Cassie Dawson, Charles Kriner, Veronica Franklin.*

The Pennsylvania Department of Education (PDE) will not discriminate in its educational programs, activities, or employment practices, based on race, color, national origin, sex, sexual orientation, disability, age, religion, ancestry, union membership, or any other legally protected classification. Announcement of this policy is in accordance with state and federal laws, including Title IX of the Educational Amendments of 1972, Sections 503 and 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, and the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990.

PDE employees and participants who have an inquiry or complaint of harassment or discrimination, or who need information about accommodations for persons with disabilities, should contact the Affirmative Action Officer, Department of Education, 333 Market Street, Harrisburg, PA 17126-0333.

SUCCESS STORIES: EMPOWERING THE ADULT LEARNER

#98-3011 FY 1992-93

Project Director and Editor: *Sherry Royce*
Field Managers: *Kathy Fasano, Joyce Kerrick, Kathy Kline, Randy Varner, and Paul Weiss*

Royce & Royce, Inc.
1938 Crooked Oak Drive
Lancaster, PA 17601

For additional copies of this publication, please contact Cheryl Harmon, telephone number, 1-800-992-2283. Out-of-state number is 1-717-782-9541. Telecommunication Devices for the Deaf (TDD) number at the Pennsylvania Department of Education is 717-783-8445.